



The Partner Connection

The Newsletter of DCA

February 2014

Commissioner Gretchen Corbin named one of Georgia Trend's 100 Most Influential Georgians



Georgia Trend Editor in Chief and Publisher Neely Young congratulates Commissioner Gretchen Corbin for her inclusion on the 100 Most Influential Georgians list.

In its January issue, **Georgia Trend** magazine included Commissioner Gretchen Corbin on its 16th annual **100 Most Influential Georgians** list. Other Georgia notables on the list include Sen. Johnny Isakson, Falcons owner Arthur Blank and country musician Zac Brown.

"Some of the 100 wield their influence in the limelight; others work behind the scenes. But all of

NEWS AND EVENTS

Changes to the HomeSafe Program Effective February 1, 2014

The Department of Community Affairs manages **HomeSafe Georgia**, a program aimed at preventing foreclosure due to unemployment or financial emergency, with funding from the **United States Treasury**. Initially, the program targeted under-and-unemployed homeowners.



We have now expanded the program beyond unemployment as follows to meet the needs of Georgia's citizens:

Mortgage Payment Assistance: Up to 24 months of mortgage payment assistance to eligible homeowners who became unemployed or underemployed (through no fault of their own) in the most recent 36 months. The program can help eligible homeowners bring mortgage payments current (up to 12 months) with the balance of the assistance paid over the remaining eligible term (up to 24 months total).

Reinstatement: Eligible homeowners who can make mortgage payments now, but became delinquent on their mortgage due to a military, medical, or death hardship within the last 36 months may qualify for assistance. Eligible homeowners will show their ability to make mortgage payments going forward. A one-time payment of up to 12 mortgage payments is available to qualified homeowners, allowing those who experienced a significant income reducing hardship, albeit short-term, to catch up on back payments using HomeSafe Georgia assistance.

Recast and Modification Program:

Homeowners with a permanent reduction of income may qualify for up to \$30,000 in assistance to reduce their mortgage to an affordable level. In conjunction with loan modifications made by participating lenders, this assistance can help homeowners who experienced permanent reductions in income from an eligible hardship achieve long term affordability. The lender must be participating in the HomeSafe Georgia program. This option provides a long term

them impact the daily lives of Georgians everywhere," noted editor Jerry Grillo.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Council Honors John Turner



L-R: Council Chair Senator Emanuel Jones, Council Secretary Mrs. Rita Samuels, John Turner.

At Georgia's 29th annual Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration at the Capitol, the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council** honored DCA Community Development Division Director John Turner for his service to the Council. "You've done so much to help the Council honor Dr. King around Georgia," noted Council Chair Senator Emanuel Jones. "We've made great progress with your help and we appreciate the work you and others at the Department of Community Affairs do for our state."

Keep Georgia Beautiful and Local Affiliates Honored by Keep America Beautiful

solution to address permanent reductions in income.

For more information, visit www.HomeSafeGeorgia.com or visit our booth at the "Help for Homeowners" event Wed., Feb. 19, 1:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. at the Cobb Galleria Centre, Hall A. More information is available at www.HopeNow.com.

State Small Business Credit Initiative: Helping Create New Jobs and Restore Historic Spaces



Restoring the original Davison's building in Atlanta created jobs and saved an historic landmark.

The **State Small Business Credit Initiative** (SSBCI) helps small businesses gain access to credit and finances projects that may not qualify for traditional lending. Since 2011, the SSBCI has committed more than \$20 million in financing to provide loans in 39 communities statewide. This funding has helped create 843 jobs and retain another 462. Now, the program can add financing the renovation of an historic landmark to its list of achievements.

The original Atlanta Davison's Department Store (which later became Macy's) closed its doors in 2003. With its soaring ceilings, stately marbled floor and magnificent chandeliers, the building had been a downtown landmark since it was built in 1927. Although the top five floors of the building were rehabilitated to office space in 2005, the bottom three floors remained vacant.

In 2008, a partnership purchased these three floors and invested \$30 million to renovate the main floor to its former splendor for special events. Recently, **Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs** (a Community Development Finance Institution serving north Georgia) and **Peach State Federal Credit** provided financing for an additional \$11 million in renovations, using \$2.7 million in SSBCI funding. The loan helped finance additional offices, conference and event space, and event amenities for the lower floors, retaining 12 employees and creating 26 new jobs.

"We're proud to use SSBCI funding to help businesses expand and hire new employees," said Commissioner



L-R: Sarah Visser, Executive Director of Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation, Jennifer Jehn, President and CEO of Keep America Beautiful, and Kanika Greenlee, Director of Programs and Development for KGB.

At its annual conference in Charlotte, NC, **Keep America Beautiful** awarded the Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation (KGB) the Diamond Level award for its five year demonstration of the highest level of excellence. In addition, KGB won an Innovation Award for its Edible Neighborhoods Program (a grant program that offered funds to plant orchards in public spaces).

Overall, Georgia took home ten awards:

National Award for Youth Recognition

First Place -
Liberty County 4H

National Award for Community Improvement

Second Place -
Allatoona Community Association

Affiliate Awards

First Place, Population less than 50,000, Previously Unrecognized Group -
Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission

First Place, Population 50,001-200,001, Previously Recognized Group -
Keep Albany Dougherty Beautiful

First Place, Population 50,001-200,001, Previously Unrecognized Group -
Keep Athens Clarke County Beautiful

Distinguished Service Citation (3rd Place), Population 50,001-200,001, Previously Recognized Group -
Keep Smyrna Beautiful

Distinguished Service Citation (3rd Place), Population 50,001-200,001, Previously Unrecognized Group -

Gretchen Corbin. "When these funds can be part of broader community goals as well, like this great project that provides downtown Atlanta with new energy, we consider that a double victory."

For more information about the State Small Business Credit Initiative, contact Holly Hunt at holly.hunt@dca.ga.gov.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

PlanFirst Will Recognize Communities with Vision

The Department of Community Affairs' new **PlanFirst** program will reward communities that demonstrate an established pattern of implementing their local Comprehensive Plans. Communities of all sizes may apply, and should show:

- A history of public involvement with development of the plan
- Active engagement in plan implementation
- Proven progress with achieving the community's stated vision or goals.

2014 applications are due May 15. PlanFirst designation will continue for three years. We encourage communities to reapply after three years to extend access to program incentives:

- Statewide recognition as a PlanFirst community
- An additional point in the **Qualified Allocation Plan** for rental housing developments to further local affordable housing goals
- The ability to apply for **CDBG** annually during the designation period (for non-entitlement communities)
- Bonus points on DCA programs such as the **Redevelopment Fund**, the **Employment Incentive Program**, and the **Downtown Revolving Loan Fund**
- Three additional points for **CHIP** applications
- Hands-on assistance from DCA staff to help implement community work program activities
- Preference on DCA implementation assistance team scheduling

Applications and additional information are available on the **PlanFirst webpage**. Contact Adriane Wood at adriane.wood@dca.ga.gov for more information.

Community Development Institute in Douglasville, February 24-28

The **Community Development Institute** is a week-long training series coordinated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Course offerings include Downtown Development, Community Planning & Design, Housing, Real Estate Finance, Historic Preservation, Tourism, Community Development Finance, Board Development, Agriculture, Small

Keep Warner Robins Beautiful

Cigarette Litter Prevention Program

Distinguished Service Citation (3rd Place), First Time Implementation -
Keep Liberty Beautiful

Innovation Award

State Affiliate Program - Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation for Edible NeighborWoods Program

State Affiliate Recognition

Diamond Level



4.25%

Georgia Dream First Mortgage
FHA/VA/RD/Conventional Uninsured
with or without a
Georgia Dream Down Payment Loan

The [Georgia Dream website](#) provides complete information.



Georgia citizens need quick and easy access to affordable housing options and we can help! Whether you are searching by price, number of bedrooms, or even proximity to work, school or transportation, finding a home that meets your needs is easier with [GeorgiaHousingSearch.org](#) - the key to linking tenants with landlords. We offer FREE property posting, bilingual assistance, and a toll-free number (877-428-8844) available to those without internet access. Landlords can register in a five-minute process or

Business Development and Public Relations.

The training is open to local government staff, economic and community development professionals, entrepreneurs, board members, volunteers, elected officials and other non-profit organizations.

The [full agenda](#) provides hotel suggestions. [Online registration](#) is available with several payment options. For more information contact Jessica Reynolds at jessica.reynolds@dca.ga.gov.

Leadership Day at the Capitol:

February 24, 2014

The 13th Annual Leadership Day at the Capitol is February 24 at the Georgia Freight Depot. Local community leadership programs and Georgia Academy graduates are encouraged to attend. This event is a collaborative effort of the Georgia 4-H program, the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development and the Georgia Academy for Economic Development, and is sponsored by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Rural Development Council.



This event is free, but does require registration. Please register at <http://www.vinsoninstitute.org/leadership-day>.

Qualified Allocation Plan Applicants' Workshop: February 27

The [Qualified Allocation Plan](#) workshop is Thursday, February 27, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Cobb Galleria Centre.



The workshop will provide an overview of the requirements and criteria for applicants who intend to submit applications for Federal and State Low Income Housing Tax Credits and HOME loan funds during the 2014 Competitive Funding Round. This workshop will concentrate on 2014 scoring requirements.

[Register online through our website](#). For more information, contact Andria Williams at andria.williams@dca.ga.gov.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

January Financial Awards

Region One

Murray-Whitfield Joint Development Authority

- \$6 million in OneGeorgia EDGE grant funds

work with DCA staff to register large-scale listings. For more information, please contact Ron Pounds at 404-327-6864 or ron.pounds@dca.ga.gov.



The Georgia Main Street Program is now on Facebook! Like us and see what's happening in downtowns from Blairsville to Brunswick.



[Previous issues of The Partner Connection](#)

- Creates 2,400 jobs; retains 1,400 jobs
- Spurs \$450 million in private investment
- Spurs \$10 million in additional public (non-DCA) investment
- Assists in the location of Engineered Floors carpet manufacturing and distribution facility.

Region Four

Meriwether County Industrial Development Authority

- \$600,000 in Regional Economic Business Assistance (REBA) grant funds
- Creates 600 jobs
- Spurs \$80 million in private investment
- Spurs \$1.5 million in additional public (non-DCA) investment
- Assists with the location of Mando American Corporation's casting facility.

Region Seven

City of Wadley

- \$50,000 in Immediate Threat and Danger (ITD) funds
- \$150,000 in additional public (non-DCA) investment
- Assists 135 people
- Will help the city build a new well pump station.

Region Twelve

City of Newington

- \$35,000 in ITD funds
- \$122,000 in additional public (non-DCA) investment
- Will assist the city in making repairs to its wastewater treatment pond.



